
* " SAWDUST PARENTS " *
*
* PROPERTY OF JOHNNIE *
* SPEER. *

3 ANDUST PARENTS

CAST

PERRY JACKSON LIGHT COMEDY
WALTER GAIN LIGHT COMEDY
MR. HENLEY GENERAL BUSINESS
BASS NANCY G. STRING

LUCILLE SOUBRETTE
MISS JENNY OLD MAID COMEDY
MRS. HENLEY GENERAL BUSINESS

SETTING

Very neat interior. C. D. Doors L. U. R. 1 and
R. U.

PROPS

One alarm clock
Two pairs portieres for doors R. and L.
Curtains or drapes for window
Mirror on wall with comb on string
Electric Buzzer and speaking tube on wall L.
Shabby worn umbrella
Telephone on library table
Two or three sofa pillows on settee
Breakfast tray with plate of rolls.
Magazine on settee
Bath robe off R. for Bass
Strip away skirt for Miss Jenny.

(AT RISE WHILE OPENING IS ON. PERRY ASLEEP ON THE SETTEE. MAGAZINE BE-
SIDE HIM. AFTER OPENING ALARM GOES OFF. WALTER ENTERS FROM R. DRESSED
IN PAJAMAS OR BATH ROBE)

WALTER

Half past twelve. My gosh! (Goes TO TABLE AND STOPS ALARM CLOCK)
(SEES PERRY) Say what's the big idea of getting that alarm clock
going off on Sunday? (SHAKES HIM) Hey, do you hear me? Don't you
know this is Sunday?

PERRY

(SLEEPILY) Huh?

WALT

What did you get the alarm clock going off on Sunday for?

PERRY

Sunday? Is this Sunday?

WALT

Yes, this is Sunday.

PERRY

(LAYS DOWN AGAIN) Oh, all right.

WALT

Here you get up. You got me up, now you can just pile out yourself.
(SHAKES HIM) Why the devil didn't you go to bed?

PERRY

Fell asleep while reading. (STARTS TO LAY DOWN AGAIN)

WALT

No you don't. (JERKS HIM UP) You'd better get your eyes open by the
time I get out of the bath room. (STARTS TO R. U.)

PERRY

Eyes open? What do you think I am a bull pup?

WALT

That's what I said. Eyes open. (EXITS IN BATH ROOM AND CHANGE TO
BUSINESS SUIT)

PERRY

Oh go to blazes. (SINGS) Oh the sun shines bright in my old Kentucky
home, but in Missouri my gosh how it rains.

MISS JENNY

(KNOCKS ON D. L. U.)

PERRY

(CALLS) Hey, Walt, somebody's at the door.

WALT

(OFF STAGE IN BATH ROOM) Well, I can't go. I'm in the bath tub.

PERRY

Walt's in the bath tub and I'm not dressed, but you can come in if you
want to.

MISS

(OPENS DOOR SLIGHTLY) What's that? Did you say come in?

2

PERRY
(JUMPS UP EXCITEDLY) No I didn't. Wait a minute. (RUSH TO DOOR L. AND
PULLS PAPERIES ABOUT HIM LEAVING HEAD STICKING OUT) Now you can come in.

MISS
(ENTERS L. U. WITH TRAY AND CAKES) I just brought you boys up some
cakes for breakfast, seeings as this is Sunday.

PERRY
Is this Sunday, Miss Jennie?

MISS
Yes, this is Sunday.

PERRY
Are you sure?

MISS
Of course I'm sure, didn't take a bath last night? (FOR FIRST TIMES
SEES PERRY) Say what are you trying to do hang yourself.

PERRY
Nope, I haven't got any clothes on.

MISS
No clothes on? Whatever you do, don't drop that curtain. Now where's
Walter?

PERRY
You might look in the bath room and see. (GRINS)

MISS
I'll just do that. (STARTS AND STOPS) Bath room? No, that's too big
a risk (LOOKS AT PERRY)

PERRY
Say, Miss Jennie, I'll be down to pay the rent just as soon as I get
dressed.

MISS
Perry, did I understand you to say you was going to pay the rent?

PERRY
Yes, ma'am. How much do I owe you?

MISS
You're not going to pay me all you owe me, are you?

PERRY
Yes, ma'am---every penny!

MISS
Something is wrong. That boy aint feeling well. I guess I'd better
calla doctor.

PERRY
No honest. I got some extra money last night and I'm going to pay my
debts.

MISS
Extra money? See here, Perry, you aint been shooting poke or dicing
craps have you?

PERRY
Nope, I got a raise in salary.

MISS
Well, aint that fine? Congratulations! How much did they raise you?

PERRY
Ten dollars a week, and I got back pay forthree months.

MISS
(PROUDLY) Don't you ever mention that board bill to me again. That bill is the last thing I'm thinking of. It's your success in life that interests me. I'll never think of that bill again unless you remind me of it. That's the sort of a woman I am. (X TO L. U. PAUSE AND LOOK AT PERRY) Perry, don't forget you owe me for six weeks. (EXITS)

PERRY
(STEPS OUT AND LAUGHS) Miss Jenny is a good old soul even if she does run a boarding house.

WALT
(ENTERS FROM BATH ROOM DRESSED AND PUTTING ON COAT) Say what's this cook and bull yarn you've been handing Miss Jenny about getting a raise. You can tell the biggest lies I ever heard.

PERRY
I know it. That's why I got a raise. (STARTS EATING A ROLL*

WALT
How?

PERRY
By telling the biggest lie I could think of.

WALT
Do you really mean that you got a raise in salary?

PERRY
Sure. The boss took a census at our office yesterday, and raised everybody five dollars a week for each person they had depending upon them.

WALT
Who have you got depending upon you?

PERRY
(PATHETICALLY) I said I was the soul support of my aged parents.

WALT
Why you bare faced liar. You told me your parents died when you were born.

PERRY
They did. One of them died before I was born. I forgot which one it was, but then that doesn't matter now.

WALT
And you told your boss you had two dependents just to get a raise?

PERRY

I have got two dependants.

WALT

Who are they?

PERRY

Miss Jenny depends upon me to pay the board bill doesn't she, and you depend upon me to wind the alarm clock?

WALT

But suppose your boss finds out that you haven't got any parents.

PERRY

How's he going to find it out? He never sees me outside the office.

WALT

No, but his stenographer sees a good deal of you.

PERRY

(GRINS) Who, Lucille.

WALT

Yes, and she's Henley's niece isn't she?

PERRY

Yes, but there's no danger from Lucille.

WALT

You know how women talk.

PERRY

But I told Lucille about my parents too.

WALT

What?.

PERRY

Oh I drew a very touching picture of an old father, and how delicate mother was, and how I never would desert them no matter how broke I got. I had the whole office in tears. I swear I began to feel sorry for myself.

WALT

Of all the nuts! See here, Perry Jackson, you're going to get yourself in trouble over this.

PERRY

I should worry. Here. (GIVES HIM MONEY) You go down and settle with Miss Jenny while I get dressed.

WALT

Well, remember, I'm warning you, these sawdust parents are going to make it hot for you.

PERRY

Saw du et parents? How dare you say that my parents are made of sawdust?

5

WALT
Of course they're made of sawdust. Didn't they come out of your head?

PERRY
(THROWS CAKE AT HIM AND HE EXITS L. U. AS PERRY GOES INTO BATHROOM AND
CHANGES)

***** NUMBER ONE *****

WALTER
(ENTERS AFTER L. U. CALLING) Say, Perry, somebody wants you on the
phone.

PERRY
(FROM BATH ROOM) C₂n't come. I'm not dressed yet. You talk to them.

WALT
(STARTS L. U.) All right.

PERRY
(STEPS FROM BATH ROOM WIPING FACE AND HANDS) Find out who it is.

WALT
All right.

PERRY
And if it's Lucille--

WALT
Well?

PERRY
Find out what she wants.

WALT
Yep.

PERRY
And tell her I'll do it.

WALTER
You promise to do it even before you know what she wants?

PERRY
No matter what that sweet mama wants, papa will do it.

WALT
(DISGUSTED) Oh gosh! (EXITS L. U.)

PERRY
(SINGS WHILE GETTING DRESSED AND COMBING HAIR) My Adeline, Sweet
Adeline, if you were mine wouldn't that be fine? I cannot tell the
love I feel. But why the hell, aint your name Lucille?

WALT
(RUSHES IN L. U. EXCITEDLY) You're in it now.

PERRY
Who was it, Lucille?

WALT

WALT
Yes, and what do you suppose she wants?

PERRY
It doesn't matter. Did you tell her it was O. K.?

WALT
Sure, you told me to, didn't you?

PERRY
Atta boy. What did she want?

WALT
She and Henley are coming over here to take your father and mother out for a ride.

PERRY
(STAGGERS) What?, My gosh! What did you tell her?

WALT
I told her that you said that anything she wanted to do was---

PERRY
You darn fool, my father and mother can't go riding. (ANGRILY) Can they?

WALT
Well, I've never even seen them walk.

PERRY
Go down and tell Lucille that they will have to stay in all day. They can't go out in the rain because--

WALT
Because they're sawdust---

PERRY
That's it, they're sawdust---oh get out!

WALT
I wish you'd hurry up and get dressed so that you can tell your own lies. (EXITS L. U.)

PERRY
I'll swear, Walt's getting to be the most worthless man. I go the trouble to think up a perfectly good lie and he's too lazy to tell it.

WALT
(ENTERS L. U.) Well, I fixed it.

PERRY
Did you tell her that my father and mother would have to stay home all day?

WALT
I did.

PERRY
That they couldn't leave the house on any account?

WALT
I did.

PERRY
(IN GREAT RELIEF) That's right, well, what did she say?

WALT
She said that in case they would come over and spend the day with them.

PERRY
(HORRIFIED) What?, (EXCITEDLY) Suffering sardines! Why didn't you tell her they were dead? Why didn't you tell her that they had moved to Kansas?

WALT
How should I know what they are doing? They're not my parents.

PERRY
Did she say that Mr. Henley was coming with her?

WALT
Yes, and his wife too. (SITS R. OF TABLE AND EATS CAKE)

PERRY
(GROANS) Oh Lord! If he finds out that I've lied to him, I'll lose my job and--(STOPS SCARED) Maybe they can put me in the penitentiary for obtaining money under false pretenses. Maybe they can have me electrocuted. Maybe they can have me hung. Man! I'm in a hell of a fix and you sit there as calm as a paralyzed oyster.

WALT
What do you want me to do, cry?

PERRY
Think of something. Use the brains that nature forgot to give you.

WALT
You might tell the Henleys that your parents are not at home. (PERRY BRIGHTENS) Only I just now told them that they were.

PERRY
(SARCASTICALLY) Now see if you can't think of something else just as bright.

WALT
The only thing left for you to do is to borrow some parents.

PERRY
Borrow some?

WALT
Sure, hire a couple of middle aged people to pretend that they are your parents for two or three hours.

PERRY
By George! I wonder if it's possible? But I've only got a few minutes. Where will we get them? (EXCITEDLY)

WALT
I'll run down the street and see what I can find. There's Tony the banana man, and Becky Cohen the woman that runs the pawn shop.

PERRY
Say, do I look like the son of a wop?

Wait
No, but with that imagination of yours, I'd put you down as the son of a liar. (EXITS L. U.)

PERRY
(PUTTING ON COAT) Confound it, of all the blame--(MISS KNOCKS L. U.)
Come in. Of all the darn--(KNOCKS L. U.) Come in. (MISS ENTERS) Pools!

MISS
(STARTLED) What's that?

PERRY
I beg your pardon, Miss Jenny; I didn't mean that for you.

MISS
Well, you be careful of your language. Remember I'm a lady, even if I do fry liver and onions. (PERRY WALKS UP AND DOWN EXCITEDLY) What's the matter? In some sort of a mess?

PERRY
Mess! I'M in a hell of a mess.

MISS
There you go again. Didn't I tell you to be careful? You shew me the same respect just as if I was your mother.

PERRY
(EXCITED AND DELIGHTED) By the ghost of Andy Gump. Miss Jenny, you're it. (GIAPS HER ON THE BACK) You're it.

MISS
I'm it? What kind of an it?

PERRY
You're the cat's whiskers.

MISS
I am not. (INDIGNANTLY) I'm nobody's whiskers and no part of a cat.

PERRY
Miss Jenny, I want you to do something for me, will you?

MISS
Well, I don't know. (FIERCELY) But don't you ever call me an animal's mustache.

PERRY
Miss Jenny, how would you like to be my mama?

MISS
(SCREAMS) Oh, he's insulting me. I'm in danger. Help! How dare you, sir? (X TO D. L. U.)

PERRY
(TRYING TO CALM HER) Oh shut up. I didn't mean anything. I meant how would you like to be my mother?

MISS
Your mother? Now that's different. (SMILES COYLY) Ahem! (AFFECTED EMBARRASSMENT) Where did your dear father see me?

(ASTONISHED) My father?

PERRY

MISS
I suppose he fell in love with me at first sight.

PERRY

No, you've got that all wrong. My father hasn't seen you. He's dead.

MISS

(STARTLED) And you want me to marry a dead man?

PERRY

No, I want you to pretend for about an hour that you are my mother. Some people are coming to see me and I told them that my parents are living with me, and if they find out that I've lied. Well---(TRYING TO FRIGHTEN HER) I may get hung!

MISS

(STARTS) Hung? My stars! I've had boarders die on my hands but I've never had one hung before.

PERRY

Well, that's what will happen if I don't have some parents.

MISS

But I can't be both of your parents.

PERRY

We'll say that father has gone to drug store to get some cough syrup. If they see you they'll be convinced that I'm telling the truth. (SEIZES HER HAND) Come on down stairs.

MISS

Here, wait, wait! Wait a minute before I promise to be your mama. You tell me one thing, are you sure your pa's dead?

PERRY

Yes, he's dead.

MISS

And buried?

PERRY

And buried why?

MISS

Because I don't want to get into no scandal even with a ghost. (BOTH EXIT)

***** NUMBER TWO *****

GAIL

(ENTERS L. U. AND CALLS) Oh, Perry! (WHISTLES) Oh, Perry. Where the devil is he? Say, Perry, I found your father. (GOES TO TABLE AND PICKS UP PHONE) Say, Shorty, you know that gentleman that came in with me that's waiting in the hall. Well, tell him to leave his raincoat and over shoes in the hall and come up right away. (HANGS UP. SMILES WITH SATISFACTION) Of all the luck I start out to find a father for Perry and bump into my own cousin Bass. It takes brain to do anything like that. (BASS KNOCKS ON L. U.) Come in, Cousin Bass.

BASS

BASS

(HOLD S I. U. WITH RAISED UMBRELLA HIDING FACE VERY NANCY WALK DOWN TO FLOORS. CENTER THEN RAISE UMBRELLA UP OVER SHOULDER)

WALT

For cryin' out loud, didn't I tell you to leave the wet things in the hall?

BASS

You said leave the rubbers and slippers in the hall. You didn't say anything about the umbrella.

WALT

Well, what are you doing with it raised in the house

BASS

I don't want to fold it until it gets dry. (PROUDLY) I paid three dollars for that umbrella and I want it to last long enough to get my money out of it.

WALT

Well, how long have you had it?

BASS

Going on fifteen years.

WALT

You've had it, long enough. Give it to me. (TAKES UMBRELLA AND PUTS IT IN ROOM R.) Sit down, Cousin Bass. (BASS SITS R. OF TABLE WALTER SITS IN BETTER R. C.) I sure am glad I ran into you. There's nobody I'd rather see today than you and I want you to stay all afternoon.

BASS

I'll stay to supper if I'm invited.

WALT

Fine. I want you to meet my buddy, Perry Jackson, he rooms here with me

BASS

You two boys alone?

WALT

Yes, all alone.

BASS

(LOOKS AT WALT SUSPICIOUSLY) There's nothing wrong with you two boys is there?

WALT

Of course not. You see Perry is expecting company today.

BASS

On that's all right, they won't seeme. I'll hide under the bed.

WALT

Oh no, they must see you in fact they are coming up here on purpose to see you.

BASS

(SITS UP SURPRISED) Indeed?

WALT
Yes, it's Perry's boss, Mr. Henley.

BASS
And what does he want to see me about?

WALT
Mr. Henley thinks you are Perry's father?

BASS
Now who the hell told him that?

WALT
Oh listen, Perry told his boss that his parents lived here with him, but they don't. They're dead. Now, Mr. Henley is coming over here to see Perry's father and mother and if he finds out that Perry hasn't any parents there'll be trouble, so you've got to be 'um.

BASS
Be 'um? Be 'um, which?

WALT
Pretend that you are Perry's father. Now I'll go find---

BASS
(JUMPS UP) No you won't. You're not going to drag some female scare-crow in here and pretend she's my wife.

WALT
I didn't say--

BASS
(GRABS WALT) You listen to me, I'll be Perry's father, but you've got to impress it upon the audience, that I've never been married.

WALT
What?..

BASS
Oh wait a minute, that won't do at all. You tell them that I got married a long time ago, but my wife died the next day.

WALT
Yeah, but how about Perry?

BASS
Oh hell, I never thought of that.

WALT
We'll tell Mr. Henley that your wife is too sick to see anybody, that she is lying down. Now how is that?

BASS
That's all right. (SUDDEN THOUGHT) But suppose she should decide to get up?

WALT
She can't get up. She's not a live woman.

BASS
What is she a spook?

There is no real she at all. She is just your sawdust wife.

BASS

(AMAZED) My sawdust wife. Every time I kiss her, I'll get splinters in my lips.

WAIT

Now you go into my room and put on my dressing gown and slippers. You're supposed to be under the weather yourself. (HENLEY RINGS TELEPHONE BELL)

BASS

(STARTS) Oh gee! Oh gosh! What was that?

WAIT

Wait I'll find out. (X'S TO PHONE) Hello, Perry is not in right now. Mr. Henley? Oh yes, sure, tell them to come right up. (HANGS UP AND LOOKS AT BASS WITH BLANK LOOK ON FACE)

BASS

(GRINS DELIGHTEDLY) Well, that lets me out.

WAIT

How?

BASS

If Perry isn't here he won't need a father.

WAIT

Not on your life. It's you they want to see. (PUSHES HIM RIGHT) Hurry and put on my slippers and take off that coat and don't forget. (EMPHATICALLY) You're the father of a twenty five year old jelly bean.

BASS

Ye Gods! I sewed a lot of wild cats when I was young, but I didn't think the crop would be jelly beans. (EXITS F. R. HENLEY KNOCKS L. U.)

WAIT

(VERY NERVOUSLY LOOKS ABOUT) Come in. (MR. HENLEY ENTERS FOLLOWED BY MRS. HENLEY AND LUCILLE) How do you do, Mr. Henley, and Mrs. Henley and Lucille, How do you do? (HOLDS F. R. HENLEY X TO WAIT MRS. HENLEY SITS L. OF TABLE LUCILLE R. OF TABLE)

HENLEY

This is young Jackson's apartment I believe?

WAIT

Yes sir, Perry isn't in right now but he will be back soon.

HENLEY

(COURTLY) Who am I speaking to please?

WAIT

(NERVOUSLY) Why-- I'm Perry's room mate--I think.

HENLEY

What? Don't you know who you are?

WAIT

I mean, I'm Walter Gains.

HENLEY

HENLEY

We didn't come here to see Perry, we came to see Perry's father.

WALT

Who is father, yes.

HENLEY

He has a father, hasn't he?

WALT

Yes, I think so.

HENLEY

Think?? Don't you know anything?

WALT

Yes sir, he has a father.

HENLEY

Then tell him we'd like to talk to him about his son a minute.

WALT

Yes sir. (BACKING TO F. R.) I'll call him, he'll be in sir just as soon
sir. (BUMPS INTO WALL R. TURNS TO WALL) Oh excuse me. (TURNS TO HENLEY
WITH SICKLY GRIN) It didn't hurt. (EXIT R. F. HENLEY STARTS WALKING
BACK AND FORTH FIERCELY)

MRS. H.

George, why do you want to be so fierce. You act as if young Jackson
was a criminal, and you had come to arrest him.

LUCILLE

That's what I say. Why, Uncle George, you had that boy so scared he
shook like an egg ready to be scrambled.

HENLEY

(POUNDS ON TABLE) Well, I intend to find out if Perry Jackson is telling
me the truth.

LUCILLE

The truth! About what?

HENLEY

About his parents living with him. It looked very much to me like he
was telling a lie in order to get more salary

LUCILLE

(ANGRILY) A lie? Perry tell a lie? That's a lie. Didn't he tell me
about his father? What a fat jolly little man he was. Said he wasn't
much taller than me and as round as a barrel. (BASS AND WALT ENTER
FROM R. BASS IN COAT AND GLOVES)

WALT

Friends, I want you to meet Perry Jackson's father. (ALL LOOK AT BASS
AMAZED)

BASS

(CHEERFULLY) How do you do? (HOLDS EXTREME R.)

ALL

(GASP) Well of all! (THEY ALL LOOK AT EACH OTHER)

BASS
What's the matter, weren't you expecting me?

HENLEY
(TO LUCILLE) ~~Henley~~ Did you say a fat man?

MRS. H.
And as round as a barrel.

BASS
Who's a barrel?

LUCILLE
Nobody. Only Perry said you were about my size and as round as a barrel.

BASS
You misunderstood him; he said that I was around the right side and you were as round as a barrel.

HENLEY
(ABRUPTLY) Well, I've very glad to meet you. I am your son's employer
(SHAKES HANDS)

BASS
How do you? I'm glad to know you. I'm my son's father.

HENLEY
(STILL SHAKING HANDS) Henley's my name, George Henley.

BASS
Rays my name, Bascomb Ray/

HENLEY
(SURPRISED) Ray? Your son's name is Jackson. (WALTER NUDGES BASS)

BASS
(UNHEEDING) Yep, that's right, Jackson. We call him Jack for short, Jack Ray.

WALT
(PUSHES HIM) No no, his name is Perry. (BASS IS GETTING CONFUSED)

HENLEY
He's in my employ under the name of Perry Jackson.

WALT
(ASIDE TO BASS) His name is Perry Jackson you ass.

BASS
His name is Perry Jackson you ass. (ALL START)

HENLEY
What's that?

BASS
Wait a minute. Be quiet and I'll explain.

HENLEY
(AFTER PAUSE. SUSPICIOUSLY) Well, Mr. Ray, we are waiting for your explanation.

BASS
Wait till I think of one.

WALT
Oh the trouble is, folks, you misunderstood cousin Bass, when he said his name was Ray he meant that was his first name.

HENLEY
Oh you mean that his name is Ray Jackson.

WALT
Yeah yeah, that's it?

BASS
Sure. (TO WALT) That's a good one. (SHAKES WALTER'S HAND)

MRS.
Then why did you call him cousin Bass? That's rather queer.

BASS
(HIS FACE FALLS) Bass does sound rather fishy.

WALT
Well, you see that's his full name, Bascomb Ray Jackson.

HENLEY
Oh that's your full name is it?

BASS
Yeah, Bascomb Ray Jackson is my full name, but when I'm sober, it's just plain Bass.

MRS.
And where is your wife, Mr. Jackson. (BASS STARTS IN ALARM) We are very anxious to meet her too.

BASS
Why---er---she's---(TRIES TO SMILE AND TURNS TO WALT) You tell 'em. I got to spit. (GOES TO EXTREME L. U. AND SPITS)

WALT
She's not feeling very well. She's lying down.

MRS. H.
That's too bad. Lucille and I will go in and see her. (THEY START L. U.)

BASS
(STEPS IN BETWEEN THEM AND THE DOOR) No no you mustn't go in there. She's got the measles and you might catch them.

MRS. H.
Measels at her age? That's very dangerous.

HENLEY
Well, let's step down to the parlor and wait for Henley.

LUCILLE
I'm sorry your wife is so sick. Has she broken out yet?

BASS
No, we've been expecting her to break out all day, but she hasn't.

MRS. H

That's too bad.

PERRY

(ENTERS C. D. SEES EVERYBODY ~~HEATED~~ GETS EXCITED AND YELLS
EXIT C. D. QUICKLY)

HENLEY

What was that?

BASS

My wife! She's broke out. (BLACK OUT AND GENERAL EXIT OR CLOSE IN)

***** NUMBER THREE *****

PERRY

(ENTERS L. U. LOOKS ABOUT THEN CALLS) Come on, Miss Jenny, I guess
Walter has gone out. (MISS JENNY ENTERS L. U. DRESSED IN SUNDAY CLOTHES)
Just so long as the Henley's haven't found me out. (LUCILLE KNOCKS
AT L. U.) There they are now.

MISS JENNEY

Heavens is it the company?

PERRY

Now don't forget your my mother and your husband is down at the drug
store.

MISS

(NERVOUS) Yes yes I'm your husband and my mother is down at the drug
store.

PERRY

No I'm your husband and my mother is down at the drug store. No, that's
not right.

MISS

I should say not. You're my mother and I'm down at the drug store.
(LUCILLE KNOCKS LOUDER)

PERRY

Oh heck! Come in.

LUCILLE

(ENTERS L. U. QUICKLY) Perry Jackson, where have you been?

PERRY

Lucille, when did you arrive?

LUCILLE

About half an hour ago. Where were you?

PERRY

I've been down stairs with Miss Jenny--I mean with my mother.

LUCILLE

Mother? (STARES AT MISS JENNY WHO IS NERVOUS) Are you Perry's mother?

Yes, I'm his mother, and his father is down at the drugstore.

LUCILLE

Well, I'm so glad that you got up.

MISS JENNY

Up? I didn't know that I was down.

LUCILLE

I guess you feel better since you broke out?

MISS JENNY

Broke out? (TO PERRY) Somethings wrong here, she thinks I've been in jail.

LUCILLE

You must be very careful. Don't take cold, or they will go in on you.

MISS JENNY

What will go in on me?

LUCILLE

Why, the measles. Don't take cold or they will go in on you. What kind of you got. The red the black or the German

MISS JENNY

I haven't got the measles and I haven't got no red or black Germans either.

LUCILLE

(TO PERRY) Your father said she had the measles.

PERRY AND MISS JENNY

(SCREAMS) Father???

LUCILLE

Yes, it's funny her husband didn't know what ailed her.

MISS JENNY

Husband? (WILDLY) I haven't any husband.

LUCILLE

Haven't any husband? Aren't you Perry's mother?

MISS JENNY

Yes.

LUCILLE

Well, isn't Perry's father your husband?

MISS JENNY

He is when he's home, but he's down at the drug store.

LUCILLE

Well, he told us before he went out that his wife was in bed with the measles.

MISS JENNY

(TO PERRY) You told me your father was dead, and here he is telling folks that I've got the measles.

10

PERRY
He is dead. I'll see what's wrong. (TO LUCILLE) you say you saw my father?

LUCILLE
I certainly did.

PERRY
Where did you see him?

LUCILLE
Right here in this room. Doesn't he live here?

MISS JENNY
(EMPHATICALLY) No, he lives at the drug store.

LUCILLE
(ASTONISHED) At the drug store?

PERRY
SHE means he's gone to the drug store. Of course he lives here, but I can't figure out how you saw him.

LUCILLE
Well, if you don't believe it, I'll prove it to you. (PICKS UP PHONE DEFIANTLY) Hello, is Mr. Henley in the parlor? Hello, Uncle George? I want you to come up here and tell Perry Jackson that we met his father what? He is? Then bring him up too. (HANGS UP RECEIVER TRIUMPHANTLY) There, I guess that will convince you.

PERRY
What?

LUCILLE
Uncle George is bringing your father up. (MISS JENNY RUSHES FOR THE D. L. PERRY GRABS HER)

PERRY
Here, come back here. You can't go.

MISS JENNY
I won't see him, I tell you. Let go of my petticoat, do you hear? (JERKS AWAY AND HE HOLDS STRIP AWAY SKIRT) There, what did I tell you. You have busted my draw strings. (SNATCHES SKIRT FROM PERRY IN GREAT EXCITEMENT EXITS L.)

LUCILLE
What's the matter, is she afraid of her husband?

PERRY
Oh no, ~~ma~~ could like a little fellow like father with one hand.

LUCILLE
(ASTONISHED) Little fellow? Is your father little?

PERRY
Wouldn't you call him little?

LUCILLE
Certainly not, but what made your mother not her act so funny?

PERRY

To tell the truth, Mother and father had a row this morning.

LUCILLE

(LAUGHS) Oh, now I understand about your father.

PERRY

You do?

LUCILLE

Why, certainly!

PERRY

I'm glad you do; I don't.

HENLEY

(ENTERS L. U. FOLLOWED BY BASS) What's the matter, Lucille?

LUCILLE

Oh, nothing. I just wanted to convince Perry that we are already acquainted with his father.

BASS

(INDIGNANTLY) And didn't Perry believe that you had already met me?

LUCILLE

He didn't seem to.

BASS

Confound that young puppy. Where is he? (LOOKS STRAIGHT AT PERRY) Young fellow, trot out my son. I'll teach him to sass his pappy.

HENLEY

Don't you know your own son when you see him?

BASS

Of course I know him. He's the hornriest snub nosed brat the Lord ever made.

PERRY

(NUDGES BASS) Father, what do you mean by pretending that you don't know me?

BASS

(FLABBERGASTED) Are you my son?

PERRY

(STERNLY) I'm Perry Jackson.

BASS

Yours? Well, I'm Perry's father and I'm glad to know you. (SHAKES HAND)

PERRY

(TO OTHERS) Father gets confused when he comes into a lighted room suddenly. You see he's been down to the drug store.

HENLEY

Funny he didn't know his own son.

BASS

Sometimes when I've been down to the drug store I

know anything at all.

LUCILLE
(SHAKES FINGER AT HIM) Naughty! Naughty! What did you go to the drug store for?

BASS
(MIMICING HER) I went after some measles medicine.

HENLEY
For your wife?

BASS
Yes, her measles are getting worse. (LUCILLE LOOKS AT PERRY. PERRY IS SIGNALLING BASS TO STOP) I was talking to the doctor and he was telling me that he thought the appendasawdust had set in, the measly appendasawdust, aint that awful?

HENLEY
Most remarkable ailment I ever heard of. Will they operate?

BASS
I don't know yet. They operate and they may have to blast.

LUCILLE
Mr. Jackson, what are you talking about? Your wife hasn't got the measles.

BASS
Oh she has too. Aint I been taking care of her. Don't I have to go in there. (POINTS R. F.) every fifteen minutes and scratch her back?

LUCILLE
(FIRMLY) Perry's real mother has not got the measles.

BASS
I don't care what Perry's real mother has got. My saw dust wife's got the measles. She's broken out until she looks like pink mashed potatoes. You just ought to see her.

LUCILLE
I have seen her.

BASS
(STARTS) Whatt???

LUCILLE
I have seen your wife.

BASS
But how can you see something which aint?

HENLEY
(TO LUCILLE) Have you met Perry's mother?

LUCILLE
I certainly did. Didn't I, Perry?

PERRY
Yes, oh, yes. (LAUGHS NERVOUSLY) Yes, Lucille met my mother.

BASS
(JERKS PERRY TO ONE SIDE FRANTICALLY) Walter, told me that your mother was dead.

PERRY
(ASIDE TO BASS) She is dead.

BASS
Are you sure?

PERRY
Positive.

BASS
Thank heavens! (TO OTHERS) Friends, I am happy to inform you that my wife is dead.

ALL
(EVERYBODY STARTS) What??

BASS
(CHEERFULLY) The measles went in and the appendix came out and she never recovered. (ALL ARE HORRIFIED)

PERRY
(JERKS HIM TO ONE SIDE) You blamed fool, my mother is not dead.

BASS
But I thought you just said that she was.

PERRY
I didn't mean that mother, I meant my real mother.

BASS
Is your other mother sawdust too.

PERRY
Shut up! (TO OTHERS) Father didn't say mother was dead, he said mother was in bed. Didn't you father? (KICKS BASS)

BASS
You kick me again and you'll be in bed. (KICKS PERRY)

LUCILLE
Well, she's not in bed and she hasn't got the measles either.

BASS
(WHEELS AT HER ANGRILY) Don't you contradict me, you sassy little doodle bug. I said my wife's got the measlos. Didn't I see her bumps?

LUCILLE
(FACE CLOSE TO HIS) Well, I didn't see any bumps and I was looking her square in the face. Blah!

BASS
(MIMICING HER) Well, I did see the bumps and I wasn't looking her in the face. Blah!

(CLOSE IN FOR NUMBER FOUR)
(AFTER NUMBER ENTERS BASS CARRYING COAT HAT AND UMBRELLA STILL WEARING ROBE AND SLIPPERS WALT ENTERS L. U. AND STOPS HIM)

Why, Cousin Bass!

BASS

(RAISES UMBRELLA THREATENINGLY) Don't you dare Cousin Bass me.

WALT

Where are you going?

BASS

I'm going to get out of this house before Perry's maw sees me.

WALT

Why, Perry hasn't any mother. She's dead.

BASS

She aint dead. She aint even got the measles. I'm leaving. (STARTS FOR L. U.)

WALT

(GRABS HIM) You can't go I tell you. Perry's mother is dead.

BASS

Well, I aint going to take any chances not even with a corpse. (THEY STRUGGLE AT R. C. MISS JENNY ENTERS L. FOLLOWED BY PERRY HOLDING HER SKIRTS)

Miss JENNY

Let loose of my skirts or you'll pull them off again, I tell you I aint going to stay here any longer.

PERRY

But you've got to stay as long as the Henley's are here.

Miss JENNY

You told me your father was dead.

PERRY

He is dead.

Miss JENNY

Then what sort of a spook do you call that? (POINTS TO BASS)

BASS

Is that Measles? Let me out. (TRIES TO GET BY)

PERRY

Hold him, Walt, don't let him go.

Miss JENNY

I want to know who is th t bald headed old geezer.

BASS

Oh, she called me a gizzard. Perry Jackson, is that old lady Sawdust your ma?

WALT

No, no she's an old maid.

BASS

Shut your darned mouth, I aint talking to you. (TO PERRY) Perry, you answer me. Is that your mother?

PERRY
My mother--that ---I should say--(LUCILLE ENTERS L. U.) She is.
(MISS JENNY SHRIEKS BASS STARTS FOR DOOR)

BASS
That settles it, I'm going. (START FOR DOOR) (WALT HOLDS HIM)

MISS
(TO PERRY) You told him that I was your mother, and (POINTS TO WALT)
he told him that I was an old maid. (BASS STARTS AGAIN)

LUCILLE
Where are you going, Mr. Jackson?

BASS
Down to the drug store for some measles medicine.

LUCILLE
It's too wet for you to go out. Perry, and I will go. Come on, Perry.
(EXITS L. U.)

MISS JENNY
(GRABS PERRY) Hold on, you explain to your father how it happened that's

PERRY
I tell you he's not my father.

MISS
Shut up. I wouldn't believe you even if I knew you were telling the
truth. (TO WALT) Walter, Caines, are you related to that old gent?

WALT
Yes'm. He's my mother's cousin.

MISS JENNY
Then tell me, is he Perry Jackson's father?

BASS
No darn it.

MISS
Shut up. You're as a big a liar as he is. (POINTS TO PERRY PERRY EXITS)

BASS
Then maybe you'll believe Walter.

MISS
I will, he's the only honest man in the house.

BASS
Tell her who I am, Walter.

WALT
Why he's Mr. Ray Bascomb---(MR. AND MRS. HENLEY ENTER L. U. WALT SEES
THEM) Jackson.

HENLEY
And Perry's father.

WALT
Certainly.

BASS
DROPS ON SOFA) Oh the devil.

24

HENLEY
What's the matter with Perry's father?

BASS
I got a cramp in my sawdust. (HOLDS SIDES)

WALT
Nothing wrong? You see Mr. and Mrs. Jackson was having a little argument

MRS. S.
(TO MISS) Oh, this is Mrs. Jackson. How do you do? We were afraid we would have to go without the pleasure of seeing you. (MISS JENNY SMILES WEAKLY)

HENLEY
(TO BASS) You seem to have pretty good health for a man of your age, Mr. Jackson. They say that married men live longer than bachelors.

BASS
(EMPHATICALLY) No, sir, they don't. If I had of been married, I'd have been worn out long ago.

HENLEY
(SURPRISED) But you are married.

BASS
I am not.

BOTH HENLEYS
What???

MISS JENNY
(WEEPS) Oh there goes my good name in the ~~sawdust~~ sewer.

WALT
No, no you misunderstood cousin Bass. He means that the way people marry nowadays would wear him out. Don't you, Cousin Bass?

BASS
Just think up anything you want to and tell 'em I said it.

WALT
Of course things are different nowadays than when he and Miss Jenny were married.

MRS. H.
Miss Jenny?

WALT
I mean Mrs. Jenny.

MISS JENNY
Yes, Miss Jenny Pottengell.

BASS
Pottengell.' Oh what a name.

HENLEY
How can your name be Pottengell when your husband's name is Jackson.

That don't go just right, does it?

BASS

Now I'll explain. You see she's been married twice. Before she married this guy, Jackson, she married this what in hell.

MRS. H

And she kept her first husband's name?

BASS

Yes, the poor soul died and all he left was his name, so she kept it.

MRS. H.

And is Perry your son or Pottengels?

BASS

I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

BOTH HENLEY

What???

WAIT

Of course Perry is Mr. Jackson's son. Cousin Bass was joking.

HENLEY

Well, I don't think much of a joke like that.

BASS

I wasn't joking, I just forgot. You see there was so many kids, I couldn't remember whether Perry belonged to the first husband or the second.

MRS. H

Oh, you had several children?

BASS

No, I didn't, but her and what in hell had about thirteen.

MISS JENNY

(INDIGNANTLY) Oh I did not. I never had a child in my life. If there was any children, you had them all by yourself. (PERRY AND LUCILLE ENTER L. U.)

HENLEY

Perry Jackson, you and your parents are either crazy, or one of your is a liar.

BASS

You're right. I've been thinking that for a long time. She's crazy! (POINTS TO MISS JENNY) and he's a darn liar. (POINTS TO PERRY)

HENLEY

Perry Jackson, you came to me yesterday, and told me that you were the only support of your aged parents.

BASS

I aint aged, I'll bet a horse I'm younger than she is. (POINTS TO MISS JENNY)

MISS JENNY

The idea! Just look at his hair. His bald head shows how old he is.

My bald head is a sign of youth. Just look at all the bald headed babies

HENLEY

Shut up, both of you.

BASS AND MISS JENNY

There--didn't you hear him tell you to shut up.

HENLEY

Perry, you said that you were the only support of your parents, and your father said that there were thirteen.

PERRY

(GASPS) Thirteen?

HENLEY

Yes, thirteen, how are you going to fix that?

PERRY

(POINTS TO BASS) Let him fix it; he did it.

MRS. E.

Now you're mother sayd there wasn't any, which is right?

BASS

Weise both right, the trouble was we were speaking of different times. She was speaking of before the war and I was speaking of after the war.

HENLEY

And what has the wargot to do with it?

BASS

Everything. When I went away to war, there wasn't any o children, and when I came back there was thirteen.

BOTH HENLEYS

What???

MISS JENNY

Oh he's ruined me again.

WALT

(GRABS BASS) What do you mean? What do you mean?

BASS

Here lay off of me. (RELEASES HIM AND HE DRAWS LONG BREATH) Now I'll explain what I meant by explanation. You see I was drafted and the old lady heard that I was dead, so she ups and marries this Potteggat and they had thirteen kids.

HENLEY

(SUSPICIOUSLY) They had thirteen while you were away to war?

BASS

Yes, you see the war lasted nearly four years.

HENLEY

What war was this?

BASS

The French and Indian.

WALT
No no he means the Spanish American.

BASS
Oh have it your own way.

LUCILLE
When you came home, what happened to Pottengel and the thirteen children?

MISS JENNY
Yes, hurry up and dispose of that family and don't ask me to have any more.

BASS
Well, what in Hell took his thirteen kids and fourteen dogs and settled in Arkansas.

MRS. H
And you remarried your wife?

BASS
Yes, and we never had any more kids.

MENLEY
But what about this young man, where did Perry come from?

BASS
Perry? Oh yes, let me I brought Perry home from the war with me.

(CLOSE IN FOR FIFTH NUMBER)
(AFTER NUMBER BASS ENTERS FROM R. MISS JENNY FROM THE L.)

BASS
Darn it, if I could find that darn umbrella I'd leave this house darn it.

MISS
Here I run into the very thing I am trying to run away from.

BASS
Well, you're not trying to run away from this thing any more than this thing is trying to run away from that thing.

MISS JENNY
Mr. Jackson, what did you mean by telling those terrible lies about me? You know very well that I wasn't your wife.

BASS
You knew that I wasn't your husband, didn't you?

MISS JENNY
Yes, but I promised Perry that I wouldn't give him away in front of those people, and he swore to me that you were dead.

BASS
Dead? Me Dead?

MISS JENNY
He said that you had been dead for twenty years, have you?

BASS

BASS
Maybe I have, but I've never noticed it.

MISS JENNY
What made him tell me that his father was dead?

BASS
His father? I said Perry's father.

MISS JENNY
Then who in the cat's ankle are you?

BASS
Well, you ought to know.

MISS JENNY
How should I know? I never saw his father. For all that I know he never had a father.

BASS
I'm beginning to think that they found Perry in a hollow stump. (TO HER)
Listen, madam, don't you know who your husband is?

MISS JENNY
Husband? I never had a husband. I'm an old maid.

BASS
(STAGGERS) My gosh this is terrible. (PERRY ENTERS)

PERRY
No, what's the matter?

BASS
Your mother just told me that she was an old maid.

MISS JENNY
Mother? I'm not his mother.

PERRY
Listen, she's not my mother.

BASS
Then whose is your mother?

PERRY
My mother is dead.

MISS JENNY
And where is your father?

PERRY
My father is dead.

BASS
Son, they don't know what they are missing. Why in the name of the
elephants trunk did you tell those folks that we are married.

PERRY
I didn't. I told them that she was my mother, and Walter told them
that you were my mother.

BASS

And they laughingly jumped to the conclusion that we were married.

MISS JENNY

But why did you do it?

PERRY

Well, Walter didn't know that I got you to be my mother and I didn't know anything about that. (POINTS TO BASS)

BASS

(INDIGNANTLY) Young man, don't you call me that. You can guess me to my face if you want to, but don't you ever call me that.

PERRY

Well, what is your name?

BASS

My name is Ray. R-A-Y Ray.

MISS JENNY

Ray what?

BASS

Ray of moonshine.

PERRY

What's your other name?

BASS

Bascomb, B-A-S Bass C- O-M-B Bascomb.

MISS JENNY

Oh what a pretty name, Ray Bascomb.

BASS

Not Ray Bascomb, Bascomb Ray

MISS

I see. I just got the ray before the bass.

BASS

And be sure and put the B before the bass.

PERRY

Allow me to introduce you two folks.

BASS

Yes, seeing that we were married and had thirteen kids, it's about time we were introduced.

PERRY

Miss Jenny, Mr. Ray. (THEY BOTH BOW) Mr. Bascomb, Miss Pettengell.

BASS

Well, I'll be darned, she's a what in hell herself. (TO MISS JENNY)
I'm glad to know you, ma, seeing that we aren't married we ought to be pretty good friends.

MISS JENNY

MISS JENNY

Now, Perry, you must call those people in here and tell them we are not your parents.

BASS

At least tell them we're not married.

PERRY

(ANXIOUSLY) But I can't tell them that. They'll find out that I've lied, and if he does he'll send me to jail for obtaining money under false pretenses.

BASS

Under false pretenses? Its getting money over false parents.

PERRY

Same thing! If he finds out, I'm ruined.

BASS

Ruined? You're not ruined, at all compared to what we are.

PERRY

Well, what will I tell them?

BASS

(GETS IDEA) I have it, I'll fix it so as to clear us and save you too.

PERRY

How?

BASS

Never mind. Where's them Henley's?

PERRY

Playing cards with Walter.

BASS

Call them in and I'll fix a story.

MISS JENNY

(TO PERRY) Be careful that he fixeds one that don't break.

PERRY

(CALLS OFF L. U.) Oh, Lucille, come in here all of you.

BASS

Yea, and you come too old grouch.

HENLEY

(ENTERS L. U. FOLLOWED BY WALT. LUCILLE AND MISS HENLEY) Did you want to see me, Mr. Jackson.

BASS

Yes, I just wanted to explain something. I think you and your family got a little mixed about pur relationship.

HENLEY

I think you and your family got a little mixed about your own relationship.

BASS

Now, Perry, told you we were his parents, didn't he?

HENLEY

Yes he did. I'm beginning to think he lied.

BASS

No, he didn't lie. He calls us his parents, but we are not not his real parents he just adopted us.

HENLEY

Adopted you?

MRS. H

You mean that he takes care of you?

JUCILLE

Well, isn't that lovely?

HENLEY

And you're not his real parents at all?

BASS

No. We are just his bastard parents.

JUCILLE

And you all live here with Perry?

BASS

Oh yes, he's our only support.

HENLEY

I suppose you two boys occupy one room, and you two the other?

BASS

(ALARMED) Oh but we're not married.

ALL THREE HENLEYS

You're not??

WALT

(ASIDE TO BASS) Confound you. Why didn't you keep still? You had it fixed once

BASS

Oh, but I left a crack open and it was a darn big crack.

WALT

Well, plug up that crack.

BASS

And how! I'll plug it up. You just leave it to me. I'll fix it.

HENLEY

Mr. Jackson, you say that you and this lady are not married?

BASS

Oh no. I sleep in the laundry basket.

HENLEY

That makes no difference. What right have you two to live together?

BASS

Oh we've got a perfect right. Darn it, she's my sister.

PERRY HENLEYS

Sister?

LUCILLE

Oh I see its an old brother and sister, and Perry's taking care of them

MRS. HENLEY

How splendid. (TAKES PERRY'S HAND) You dear boy.

BASS

(PROUDLY TO WALTER) Didn't I put the buttons on the cat's pajamas?

WALT

You be careful and keep those pajamas closed from now on.

HENLEY

I beg your pardon, Perry; I thought you were lying, but I must say your action is a noble one and does you credit. Come up to my office tomorrow. (PERRY BEAMS AND X TO LUCILLE) And as for you, sir. (TO BASS) I must say that I am glad to have met you and your sister. I congratulate you in having such a fine young man to look after you in your old age. Well, folks, shall we go? (EXIT THE HENLEYS AND PERRY. WALT STANDS IN THE D. L. U. AND LOOKS AT BASS WHO IS SWINGING THE TASSEL OF HIS BATH ROBE DELIGHTEDLY)

WALT

Cousin Bass, if I were you I wouldn't play with that tassel. It might get you into trouble.

BASS

Well, it's my tassel and I guess I can play with it if I want to. (WALT EXITS L. U.)

MISS JENNY

Mr. Ray, I want to thank you. You fixed it perfect.

BASS

Yeah, I fixed it. Like the devil I did.

MISS JENNY

Why, what do you mean?

BASS

I told these people that we were brother and sister and now we couldn't get married if we wanted to.

MISS JENNY

Get married? Who wants to?

BASS

Well, when I find out that I can do a thing that's just when I want to do it or bust. What do you say?

MISS JENNY

My land! I aint never been married in all my life.

BASS

Well, it won't hurt to take a shot, besides I got plenty to keep us both. (GETS PATHETIC) You know we are both old and lonesome and it gets darn cold sleeping by yourself in the winter time.

MISS JENNY

(WISTFULLY) I guess you're right. It would be nice to have somebody all your very own.

BASS

Well, what do you say?

MISS JENNY

But there's one thing I'm afraid of.

BASS

Oh don't let a little thing like that worry you. There's no danger of us having thirteen children. (THEY EMBRACE)

CURTAIN FOR FINALE